

“What the National Council of
Women of Canada
has done.”

BEING A REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A
PUBLIC MEETING, HELD IN CONNEC-
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Local Council of Women of Ottawa

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Addresses delivered at the Evening Session.

ADDRESS BY HER EXCELLENCY LADY ABERDEEN.

Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen :

The Ottawa Local Council of Women is not yet dead—no, not by any means. When it was formed some two years ago there were a good many predictions made about it and it was not to have a long life, and that life was not to be a merry one, but in spite of these dismal prognostications, it seems, like the National Council of which it is a part, to show very vigorous signs of life and growth. At least so would we judge from the record which has been placed before us to-day in the various reports which have been made for our benefit and of which no organization need be ashamed.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am not going to weary you by going over the records of that work. We have heard to-day reports of the thirty societies which are federated with us. We have heard also of their work. We have some slight conception of what the women in connection with all the different churches in the city, Episcopalian, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, are trying to do in the city. We have some idea of what the different societies, institutions, organizations, sisterhoods and unions are labouring to accomplish in the cause of religion, temperance, and the general help and uplifting of the community in which we live, and the mere record of these aims is enough, I think, to leave us food for serious thought. But you will ask, being thus an organization united from so many diverse quarters pledged to one aim, and that a vast one, the furtherance of the application of the Golden Rule to Society, Custom, and Law—what have we as a Local Council of Women done to redeem that pledge. Many and various have been the subjects brought before us, each having its claim on us in virtue of that pledge—and discussed, and I hope that discussion has been in no case without its value. But as you have heard to-day there have been two main objects which our Local Council—apart from the work which it has done at the request of the National Council—has attempted for the welfare of this community.

Mrs. Bronson has told us to-day in the report of the Associated Charities what it is now doing and we who were here remember the start of that Association. We remember the admirable paper which Mrs. Bronson laid before this Council now nearly two years ago—and how the effort to organize Associated Charities has gone on step by step—how it was referred to one of our own sub-committees—how the Ottawa Humane Society took special interest in the subject—how subsequently we approached the Mayor and requested him to summon a public meeting in its behalf and how cordially he entered into the project. We know, too, how Lady Ritchie, Mrs. Herbert, Mrs. Bronson and others, interested themselves in the organization of the

Society and acted on the Board finally formed, which is found to be doing a work which is really needed. I am glad to have the opportunity of mentioning this now and of pressing upon those here the necessity of supporting the Associated Charities, formed as it is of representatives of all charitable Societies and Churches to investigate cases requiring help and to obtain work for those who have not got it. The Secretary tells us that he finds considerable difficulty in finding work for the applicants. We often hear that there is no distress in Ottawa—that all who need work can find it, but the Secretary of the Associated Charities tells us a different tale, and I would ask you here to remember that every citizen of Ottawa can be of real help to the Charities if they will both refer to the Secretaries' appeals for relief and if they will let them know of jobs of work which may be available for those needing them and help to tide over a period of distress.

That is the first thing we have successfully attempted.

The second scheme was the Public Library—an effort which will be fresh in the minds of those present. We remember, too, the history of that. We remember the paper of Miss Bolton and the petition which our members undertook to get filled up with the names of ratepayers. We remember the efforts made to bring it and keep it before the community and the City Council, and finally our efforts to get the by-law carried, and we remember, too, our failure. But there never was a body of workers less discouraged by failure. (Applause.) The women of the Local Council of Ottawa positively still think that the capital of the Dominion ought to have a Public Library free and open to every citizen, and they think moreover that this need is a more important one than some of the material wants of which we hear. At one of our meetings, a speaker said he thought that our Local Councils stood to the cities in which they were established very much in the relation of a wife to her husband, and that the Local Councils of a province in turn occupied very much the same relation to the National Council, and of course the National Council claims in that aspect no other lord and master than the Dominion Parliament. (Applause.) Perhaps if that be the case the wife of the City of Ottawa need not be discouraged if on the first application she finds her husband a little disinclined to put his hand in his pocket for what he deems a needless luxury. But after all such a wife does not take the first no as final. (Laughter.) Perhaps there are means, particularly when she thinks the object she has at heart is for the good of her children, of dropping hints now and then—of using a little gentle influence at the right moment when he is in a good humour, and so bringing about a change of mind. At least this is the attitude of the City of Ottawa's wife and we are confident that the time will come when our children and our young men and maidens and our working men and women will have a free access to those treasures of knowledge, healthful recreation, high and inspiring thought which should surely be within the reach of every citizen of the capital of the Dominion. (Applause.)

But, ladies and gentlemen, I have been asked by the members of this Council to-night to dwell not so much on the work attempted here locally as to tell them something of the work being carried on by other Local Councils throughout the Dominion, and therefore if I give you a tedious list of their efforts you must forgive me and remember it is but your own fault.

First then let me remind you of the successful efforts which have been made by all the Local Councils in Ontario for the introduction of manual education and more especially the teaching of cooking and sewing into our public schools. The two Councils of Hamilton and Toronto were most active in this respect at the beginning, but they were soon joined by all the other Councils in Ontario, and although at first they had no reason to think that their wishes would be so speedily fulfilled, yet in a year the Provincial Government introduced and gave the needful permission, so that now any School Board in Ontario may introduce manual teaching into any of the schools. Moreover, Hamilton saw that one great difficulty which would lie in the way of the introduction of this manual training would be that there would be no teachers prepared to give it, and therefore they started a School of Domestic Science to teach young ladies in these arts in such a way that they should be prepared to make a beginning. Several other Councils have taken up this subject. In Winnipeg our Council was pressing the subject when we were last there, and in British Columbia a bill was prepared last Session and will probably be introduced during the course of the present Session of the Local Legislature having the introduction of manual education for its object. I do not think I need speak to a Council of Women on the necessity of introduction of this training. The mothers of Canada realize but too well its importance and the difficulties and discomfort which many of their children have had to go through in the past for want of this training which they had not time to give themselves. That then is one of the first things in which we interested ourselves, and are still interested. We hope at our coming Conference at Montreal, in May, to have a section specially devoted to the importance of manual training, and we hope that Dr. Adler, of New York, and other authorities will speak to us on the subject.

I ought to say that in the Province of Quebec this has been taken up too, and in Montreal much has been done towards it. We had the pleasure of seeing the opening of a new public school, the Aberdeen school, the other day, where five of the schools in Montreal take practical lessons in cooking. It has been said sometimes that children would not care for this but when girls are told to come away from their grammar and arithmetic to their cooking, it is easy to see which of their lessons they like best. (Applause.)

Another thing taken up was the appointment of women factory inspectors. There also the Provincial Government of Ontario met our Councils most kindly, and in fact did more than we asked, for not

only did they appoint a woman factory inspector, Miss Carlisle, but they also made a provision whereby any city wanting inspectors for the workshops can make an application to the City Council and of the two inspectors authorized one must be a woman. Moreover, if the appointments having been asked for by a hundred ratepayers is not made within three months thereafter the Lieutenant-Governor is empowered to make them and to fix the salaries. Our Toronto Council got up such a petition, the three months elapsed, and on the very last day the appointment was made and with very satisfactory results. The Quebec Government has also promised to appoint a woman factory inspector for the province this session.

The Associated Charities movement has not been taken up in Ottawa alone. Montreal was also early in the field with a paper, but the organization has not been yet formed. Victoria has started a Friendly Aid Society with kindred aims. The city is divided into districts, with two lady visitors for each, a room is given by the civic authorities where clothes are collected and distributed and the ladies of the Society meet and arrange to give relief to the various applicants.

Then in Vancouver only last month our Local Council invited all the clergy to confer with them on the subject with the result that a Friendly Help Society was inaugurated. Seventeen churches of all denominations are joined in this Society as well as the Salvation Army and other societies. The city is divided into twenty-five districts with two lady visitors to each. They also appointed a central Board, formed of the clergy of the various denominations. A room was given by a business firm, clothes and food are sent by the citizens who are already finding it a great relief to be able to refer cases to this depot. During the first week of its operations, forty-five men and thirty-five women applied for assistance, and during the second week thirty-seven men. Winnipeg is also forming a scheme of Associated Charities.

Then there is another matter which many of our Councils are taking up, namely—the appointment of women on the Board of School Trustees. At Victoria the School Act was amended in this respect, and the Secretary of the Council was run for the office with the result that she came out at the head of the poll. She has done good work during the past year which in some quarters I understand is considered as being too good. (Laughter.)

This year two ladies were nominated but only one of the two was elected.

At St. John, N.B., this matter has also occupied the attention of our Council and after a very animated debate it was decided to go forward. Last year the Legislature asked the Council to name two ladies for the Board of School Trustees, and this year the Attorney-General has introduced a Bill providing that two women are to be placed on each Board.

In Nova Scotia, Halifax and Yarmouth have petitioned that

women be given the right to sit on the Board of School Trustees. I need not point out the advantages of women sitting on these Boards. These must be patent to everyone, when one considers that half the children in our schools are girls.

There is one little matter which perhaps will make you smile and that is the ringing of the Curfew Bell. Kingston, London and St. John have asked and obtained that Curfew Bells should be rung so that children must go home at eight o'clock in winter and nine in summer.

Then another thing which has been before all our Councils has been the appointment of police matrons for the care of women prisoners when first arrested. In some cases they have obtained the appointment of matrons and in some not. In most instances, however, they have been able to obtain better arrangements for the care of the prisoners. This is a matter in which the Woman's Christian Temperance Union has been much interested and in which we have only followed their lead. The Local Council at Quebec has made this a very special subject of its own with the result that all the arrangements respecting women prisoners in that city have been revised (applause) so that prisoners are now classified, first offenders being separated from the others, and by having two matrons prisoners are not left alone night or day, and that those under sixteen shall be sent to the Reformatory. Halifax also has obtained a separate place for the women prisoners when arrested, previously to which all prisoners were in the same place.

As regards the work of our individual Councils, Montreal, as one of our best Councils, has not only taken up the matter of Associated Charities, manual education, women factory inspectors, etc., but also the question of sanitation. They have arranged for a number of "Health Talks" in connection with the different congregations, and these are going on all over the city, thus disseminating much useful information especially for mothers and particularly in regard to that most important matter, infant mortality. They have also printed a number of rules on cards concerning the method of looking after young children, and these are distributed free. They will be glad to send these cards to other Councils if desired on postage being paid. They are also drawing up a plan for a Home Reading Association. I am afraid I should talk too long if I tried to explain the methods for instituting these reading circles. To the Montreal Council we are also indebted for many an able exposition of the aims and work of the Council given to us by Mrs. Drummond, President of the Local Council of that city.

In Quebec they are planning and carrying out a training school for servants at the Convent of the Franciscan Sisters, where they hope to have a number of girls from the country districts who shall be recommended by the Curés.

There will probably be another training school for Protestant girls.

NOTE---The President of the Yarmouth Local Council has been appointed a School Trustee.

To our Council in London we are indebted for getting into closer touch with the Trades and Labour Councils which we consider will be of great value to us. The Trades and Labour Congress has lately passed a resolution whereby they express a wish to have a representative on our Council in any city where they may be organized and this will help us to arrive at a right understanding of matters regarding working women. London has also the distinction of being the first Council to admit a political association. Only a few days ago we had an application from the Conservative Women's League to be admitted to which we gave a very ready welcome. We have sometimes been accused of being a political organization—I am not sure in which direction—and I have often had to explain that we are in no sense of the word political. But we accept the affiliation of societies of political women in the same way as we accept that of any church society. We ask of them no pledge except one that they will help us to apply the golden rule to society, custom, and law. (Applause.)

In the Maritime Provinces the Councils are very active. The St. John Council under Lady Tilley's earnest guidance. I have mentioned their action already in regard to the Boards of School Trustees. They have also obtained valuable statistics regarding women in the various countries of the world.

They have also arranged for an ambulance and patrol wagon to be offered to the city council.

Halifax has supported kindergarten teaching for the blind, and have also taken particular interest in the immigrants arriving in that city. A committee from the Council meets every boat that comes and arranges with the Immigration Department for the comfort of the immigrants. The Council is particularly grateful to the Government for acceding to the request made for the change of immigration matron, and for the appointment of Mrs. Cornell of Quebec to that post. We have also to thank Mr. Kenny for his help in this matter. (Applause.)

At Edmonton we have also a little Council which has taken an interest in all our work and was plucky enough to be ready to make arrangements to send three delegates to the Council last year but at the last moment some unforeseen hitch occurred about their transportation. They formed a committee last year to aid in all ways the hospital which is being built by the sisters.

The Council at Calgary has only just been formed, but much interest is being shown. The societies of the place are joining and under the presidency of Madame Rouleau I know they will make good progress. They are taking up the subject of Associated Charities.

Regina promises to be as good a Council as we have. They have started a good branch of the Aberdeen Association for sending out literature to the settlers in the Northwest. They are also engaged in an hospital scheme and have already arranged for a nurse and two rooms where patients can be taken in until an hospital can be started,

and anybody who understands how badly off the settlers of the Northwest are in the time of illness will realize the great importance of work in this direction.

Brandon, another newly formed Council, with Mrs. McEwen, a farmer's wife of renown, as president, had an interesting meeting last week and suggests the possibility of starting a reading room and library, and of trying to diminish the evil of late hours for girls in shops by influencing customers to buy early.

Rat Portage, our last formed Council, has undertaken under Mrs. McKay to work for the establishment of an hospital.

West Algoma, under the presidency of our friend Mrs. Gibbs collects literature for the Aberdeen Association. They have also opened a Woman's Exchange where work done by women in poor circumstances or by those who want to get some money for charitable objects can be sold. Mrs. Gibbs has been our delegate both at Washington and Toronto, and we have learnt to depend on her valuable help.

Then coming to British Columbia I can speak most highly of the Council at Victoria in every way. They take the deepest interest in all our work. I have already spoken to you of their action in regard to the Board of School Trustees and in Associated Charities. The directors of the Agricultural Exhibition of the province asked them to take up the Industrial Section of the annual exhibition held in Victoria. This they did with the result that it was not only a success in every way but was the only branch of the exhibition which turned out to be self-supporting. (Applause.) We were present at the annual meeting and the papers sent in and the resolutions brought up were very interesting.

I have also spoken to you already regarding Vancouver. They also sent a delegate all the way to Toronto. There are two other little Councils in British Columbia which I must not forget, East Kootenay, with headquarters at Donald—not a very big place. They have started a private school there, a working party for an hospital, a library for the young people and a society of King's Daughters.

The other small Council is Vernon where they also hope to have an hospital by and bye. Meanwhile they have arranged for the women of the place to undertake the industrial section of their annual exhibition, and are helping to support a reading-room.

Then remember that our National Council has asked our Local Councils to form sub-committees to consider three most important subjects: —

1. The length of working hours for women and children. One of our Councils brought up a resolution last year to the effect that we should take steps to get the hours reduced to nine hours a day. But when we came to consider the question we found that there was not sufficient information at our disposal to enable us to reach a definite

conclusion. We therefore decided to request all the Local Councils to consider the question and embody their views in a report to be considered at the next annual meeting of the National Council. (Applause)

2. The laws for the protection of women and children. It seems clear that some alteration ought to be made for this purpose, and this we hope to bring to the attention of the government.

3. Facts were brought before us at our last annual meeting showing that in various quarters there was an incursion of the most pernicious literature possible into the Dominion and that in spite of the law which had been made to prevent it—in spite of the best efforts of the Post Office and the Customs Departments in many cases literature of the most terrible description was being placed in the hands of our boys and girls. We have, therefore, asked all our Local Councils to most carefully investigate this subject, and we are very sure that we shall have the co-operation of all men and women throughout the Dominion to prevent this evil. Even if we only sound a note of warning we shall feel that our action in this matter has not been in vain. (Applause.)

So much for the actual work done. But I think—remembering that our National Council was only inaugurated two years ago last December—that we may truly thank God and take courage.

And, gentlemen, you who are here to-night—and we thank you for being here as showing your interest in this movement—may I ask you now whether you think that the work which I have endeavored to describe is likely to make women unwomanly and forgetful of their homes? The National Council of Women of Canada has much to be grateful for to the men of Canada—to the public men of Canada—whether of Church or State—for their approval, co-operation, support and encouragement, without which they can do nothing. They have much to be grateful for to-night. But, ladies and gentlemen, we cannot be unaware that there are still some men who are not quite sure of what this Council is going to come to—what it all means—what it is going to do, and I think some have visions of what are called “New Women” invading those homes and of homes being left desolate? I would like, if there are any such here to-night, let me make them one request. If they do think this is not merely a harmless fad, but one full of evil possibilities for the women of Canada, may I then ask them to come and watch our meetings, to read what literature we issue, and above all to watch the lives of those women who are moulding and leading this Council of Women of Canada. If you will do this, gentlemen, and will do it impartially, we are not afraid of your verdict. We cannot, of course, promise that every resolution that shall be brought up shall be exactly to your minds, but then perhaps the resolutions brought up in your City Council or even those brought up in Parliament on the hill yonder are not always in consonance with our ideas. (Laughter.)

But one thing I think we can say that at any rate up to the present

in all our discussions the women of Canada have never shown themselves in any way forgetful of their homes, nor in any way untrue to those homes. (Applause.)

When the National Councils of France, Germany, Great Britain, Sweden, Denmark, and others of which Miss Wilson has told us this afternoon—when these meet in the International Council of Women to be held in London in 1898, I have no doubt at all but that the National Council of Women of Canada will stand high amongst them; and simply for this reason, that it can claim to be so absolutely representative a Council and because those who are leading it are so imbued with the sense that woman's first mission and glory lies in the right fulfilment of her duties in the home. They have joined this Council because they not only believe that it will not hinder them in these duties but that it will help them to rightly fulfil them, although with a higher aim and broader understanding and broader aim than ever before.

You tell us that we are queens of our homes—you tell us that you believe that in the strength of the homes of Canada lies the strength of the nation—you grant that that home is strongest where love reigns supremest. We are acting on that principle, but are asking to be allowed to take it a few steps further. The principle at which we aim is the making of this love supreme not only in the home but in Society, in Custom and in Law, and we claim that it is our mission as women to do what we can thus to apply it in any practical way we see open to us, in co-operation with you, gentlemen, for be sure, we shall never be so rash as to try to do it without you.

This then is the spirit in which we desire all the work we undertake to be pervaded. Our main cause, of rejoicing, however, and our chief hope lies, not so much in the actual work done, but in remembering by whom it has been done. By whom? By women belonging to every church—to all political parties—to all classes of society, high and low, rich and poor, and to every shade of opinion, yet all joined together to strive to lift a lofty ideal—the very highest ideal before the community and to try to apply that ideal to our law, our customs, our social life. You may say perhaps that that is all sentiment. Well do not know that everything about which I have spoken to you tonight is all sentiment, but if it be, still it is a sentiment which may transform the life of a nation. (Applause.)

There will doubtless often be failure—there must be disappointments—there must be difficulties. We know all that and are prepared for it. But if the women of this National Council throughout this Dominion are faithful according to their lights to the pledge which unites them, can we judge what its effect will be whether in an individual community or in the country at large? Think you that it is a small thing that the women of Halifax and Saint John are taking an interest in the needs of the women of Victoria and Vancouver, are trying to understand their position and wants and uniting with them in

common effort? And is it a small thing that the women of Quebec and Ontario should try to enter into the position of the women of Manitoba and the Northwest and so realising in a new way the bond of a common sisterhood and stirring within them a truer idea of what it means to be a Canadian—to understand something more of that patriotism which will make us long that both we and our sons and daughters should so be able to serve our country as to make her name high among the nations of the earth. (Loud applause.)

What if it may be given to the women of this country to do no small part in bringing about that union which every lover of Canada longs for. It is said that it is ever among women that prejudice dies hardest,—what if it may be given to us to be the first to loosen the bands of prejudice, and if in the midst of strife it be given to us not only to keep sweet social and private ties but to forge bonds of love in common aim and effort for the public weal which will render powerless the onslaught of ancient feuds and rancours which seek to poison the life of our country.

That is at least what we have bound ourselves to do—to make the Golden Rule the law of our lives whether in our homes, in society, in politics or in our church life. That is the aim which we have put before ourselves. We say the words so lightly, Is that *all*, you ask—is that *all* your aim? All indeed, and may God grant that the women of the National Council of Canada may understand, if only in some small measure, what that “all” may mean. (Loud applause.)

ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR GENERAL.

Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen, the resolution which has been entrusted to me as the mover, is :—

“That this meeting records its sense of the value of the work of the Local Council of Ottawa, and offers all good wishes for its continued usefulness, and for the prosperity of the National Council of Women of Canada.”

I shall content myself with endeavouring to launch this trim and well-constructed resolution, leaving it to the experienced navigators who will follow me to guide and conduct the craft into port in safety and with success.

But before attempting to add a word in reference to the resolution, I should like to be allowed to congratulate the Ottawa Local Council of Women upon the proceedings of to-day—upon the large gathering this afternoon (during a portion of the proceedings at which I had the honour of being present), and also upon the very considerable assemblage here this evening—an evening of most singular weather (hear, hear, and laughter) and not at all conducive to throngs of persons leaving their

homes. But I do not allude merely to externals in the matter of attendance and so forth; I refer also to the tone and spirit which has pervaded the meeting to-day, and of course particularly to the record which has been given by the president of the Council this evening of the work which has been accomplished. But while one feels that there is cause for congratulation and satisfaction, I also feel that to some of us, the surroundings and the circumstances are suggestive of another thought,—a wistful thought, called forth by the recollection of a former gathering under the auspices of the Women's Council in this hall. We think of how upon that occasion we had with us the presence of a great man, a prince of men, who is no longer with us,—a man whose life and example may well be commemorated, and whose memory may well be cherished by his countrymen. And it has, in a sense, been perpetuated. But his life might well be commemorated in the most solid and lasting manner—whether in marble or in metal; and all the more because of the marvellous modesty, the unassuming quietness which ever characterized him, which made him ever free from anything like self-seeking or showing any craving for praise or celebrity. His fame and worth have been recognized, and will, I trust, ever be remembered and treasured by the people of this country. And when Sir John Thompson was here to testify his appreciation of the National Council of Women he came as a public man. To-night again I rejoice in the fact that we have on the platform two specially representative members of the representative assembly of the country; and while I say this, of course it is not from any want of appreciation of the personal and individual kindness which has prompted them in responding to the invitation to them to be present, but of course they cannot, and I am sure would not wish to divest themselves of their more public character. In the same way, if I may be allowed to say so, I desire to be here, not only on account of personal or private predilections regarding this movement, but as having the honour in a sense to represent the most illustrious woman now living in the world (applause); and in that capacity to testify to the value of women's work.

Now as to the words of the resolution. It speaks of the value of the work done. As I have already said, the president has given a record of this, some of us perhaps thought it a prolonged record, but as Her Excellency said, that was not her fault, because it was in compliance with a request that she endeavoured to answer to some extent the very natural and reasonable questions, What have you done? What are you doing? What are you going to do? I think the record at any rate showed something in the way of accomplishment of work, and good work. (Hear, hear.) I shall not attempt to recapitulate or to enlarge upon that topic; but I could not help noticing the simile that was used with regard to the position of the Council of Women as being that of a wife. (Laughter.) Well, we all know that a man who is blessed with the inestimable benefit of a good wife, but who does not know how

to make use of that privilege, shows a large amount of the block-head in his constitution. (Laughter.) I have been told this afternoon by a distinguished friend (whom I am glad to see among the audience) that in the Province of Quebec you will find that the farmers especially, who constitute a large portion of the community in that province, have a very excellent habit in the matter of their earnings; I am told that the custom of many of the *habitants* is, not to button up their pockets and dole out some small pittance in response to the request of the wife, but to place the whole amount in the wife's hands. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) That system I believe has excellent results. At any rate, I am under the impression that if you went into the Province of Quebec with an idea of finding farms which the owners would be very glad to get rid of, or farms with no owner at all, you would have a very fruitless search; but that on the other hand, if a farm is to be sold there are a large number of offerers for it; perhaps for this reason among others, that the farmers of Quebec have often placed their earnings in the prudent hands of their wives. (Laughter.) I make this digression because I think it is generally to be found that women are not apt to squander when a certain amount of responsibility is placed upon them. (Hear, hear.) Of course we have all heard about dressmakers' bills, which are said to be a sore trial to the husbands (laughter), but perhaps that was where the husband does not encourage the wife to take him into her confidence, and therefore arrangements have had to be made by hook or by crook. (Laughter.) At any rate, so far as we have had experience of the Women's Council we must observe that they have not been rash or inconsiderate in this respect. Perhaps somebody may ask me if I have tried this plan with regard to my earnings in the same manner. (Laughter.) Well, I may safely say that whenever I have attempted that process I have had no reason to regret it. (Laughter.)

Her Excellency has given us some specimens of the work of the Council in a direct sense, but its indirect influence is perhaps of still more value and importance. It is sometimes said that this movement is vague. Perhaps in one sense that is a good thing, because if it was only for one or two different purposes and objects it might be open to the objection that is sometimes made, that we have already too many societies, and do not want any addition to the number. In one sense this is a new society; but in another it is not, because it tends to the consolidation of societies which are already in existence, and to the prevention of over-lapping and so forth. If a new statute is passed for the codification of other statutes, it is not over-burdening the statute-book with new legislation, but on the other hand lightening it, because it is simplifying what has to be done, and tending to greater efficiency and saving of time. This movement, this agency, tends to centralize and consolidate the energies of those who have energies to exercise, and to band together the best workers for the best work; and that we must recognize as a work of value. (Cheers.)

I feel bound to add also that the time is coming, if it has not already come, when, to profess to be unacquainted with this movement, will not be regarded as any mark of distinction, but on the contrary, as a sign of want of intelligence and knowledge about something which has become recognized as a most valuable and important agency. It is not a fad; it is not a phantom; it is a practical, a definite, and I believe a growing movement, which is calculated to promote in a comprehensive, patriotic and national manner the true welfare of the country. And with reference to the patriotic and national element, I cannot help remarking that while, as I said, we have on the platform to-night representative members of the representative House, never was that House more truly representative than with reference to the proceedings of last night. Though I am debarred from the privilege of listening to the debates, I am allowed to read them; and the note that was struck last night in the House of Commons, ringing out clear and true, and echoed, as I am sure it will be, in all parts of the Dominion, showed the loyalty, the patriotism, the national principle, which we desire to promote, and which will ever, I believe, be found strong and flourishing within this Women's Council. (Loud applause.) For these reasons I commend the resolution to your acceptance. (Further applause.)

An interlude here followed, during which Mrs. Morris, a member of the Ottawa Morning Musicales, sang.

ADDRESS BY THE HON. GEORGE E. FOSTER.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen :

I am going to make an honest avowal at the outset, and that is that I cannot take any thanks at all for leaving even the much-desired atmosphere of the House upon the hill for such an agreeable re-union as this. Some of the things that are going on there to-night may be very important, but I would not have been sorry if this meeting had been in the afternoon. (Laughter.) I should have enjoyed the calm and peaceful season of two or three hours here probably much more than I enjoyed the afternoon in the House, where I was being stormed at by shot and shell from Sir Richard, as being the unfortunate individual that has to make the budget speech. (Laughter.) I am glad that Your Excellency has not an opposition in this parliament; and when His Excellency remarked that possibly the budget speech that has been delivered to-night was a little lengthy, I felt that it was necessary for me to maintain the perfect right of every person who has to make a budget speech—the exposition of the policy of the party in power (and long may Her Excellency's party be in power)—to unlimited time, and the right not to be criticized for taking all the time that is necessary. (Applause and laughter.)

When the Queen's speech was read in Parliament—I don't know

whether I am on debateable ground (laughter)—I am not speaking of this year—I am going back several years—I remember that my hon. friend, who led the Opposition, found fault with the bill of fare because it was meagre; but no person who heard the bill of fare to-night can find fault with it on the ground that it is meagre. It will compare well, I think, with any bill of fare that even so august an assembly as the Parliament on the hill has presented to it in any year; and it will not be far from the truth if I say that the measures noted as having been begun, as being partly finished, and as under progress, will do as much or more for the good of the body-politic of Canada than the measures which may be passed by even the Canadian Parliament in any one of its best years. (Applause.)

In the first place then I feel that I may congratulate myself upon having the opportunity of so agreeable a transition from the noisy scenes of parliament to the quiet and peaceful, and I am bound to say this evening, more thoughtful atmosphere of this your Parliament of Women. (Applause.)

Your Excellency remarked that the Ottawa Local Council of Women was not dead yet. No, indeed! If on an evening like this I had been going to attend any men's meeting that I can conceive of, I should have gone with the feeling that the audience would be far more sparse than the audience that I see here to-night; and it is an indication—I will say an earnest—not only of what your Women's Council has done, but of what it will do in the future, judging from the persistence and ardour of purpose which will bring out for the review of the year so many on so uncomfortable and inclement a night. (Applause.)

Your Excellency made a remark with references to many of the branches of work with which the Local Council of Women here and the Women's Councils throughout Canada have been engaged during the year. I had the pleasure of reading the report of last year, and of knowing something of the work which has been performed, and I am certain that all the work of the Council must commend itself to the honest thought and attention of every man in this room. I do not believe that this room contains any men who do not approve of women's work which was outlined here to-night. I am certain that those remarks were made for some recalcitrant persons outside this room, whom Your Excellency hoped to reach through the medium of the press. (Laughter.)

I think I observed a slight intimation that possibly a wife (that wife being the Women's Council might make a request from her husband (the husband being the parliament on the hill). (Hear, hear.) Now it is always said that a man is in the best of humors after he has had a good dinner. (Laughter.) I am quite sure that if a request is to be preferred to the parliament on the hill, the best time to make that request will be directly after an election, for most certainly the Government at that particular period of time will be in the very best of

humor. (Laughter.) Now I am not sure that I have not introduced a subject of grave doubt, and which will require a great deal of thought, namely, as to whether you will have to prefer that request to my hon. friend who sits there, or to some one who represents the party that I belong to and that is at present in power. (Laughter.) When the request comes, whether the one be there or the other, may I express the thought that such a request, preferred by such a representative body as the Council of Women, ought to be most carefully considered (applause and laughter)—almost as diplomatic a remark as His Excellency made about the disposal of his purse. (Renewed laughter.)

For my own part I do not need to have come to this meeting to-night to have been converted to belief in women's work in any one of its phases. Since I began to read and think I cannot recollect the time when I was not a complete and thorough advocate of the greatest possible freedom for women, as well as of the greatest possible duty incumbent on women to work in applying the golden rule to society, custom and law. No one who reads the early Bible literature and the literature of Greece and Rome and of all countries since, can fail to gather from the pages of history the worth, the beneficent influence, and the value of women's work in the world (hear, hear); and if there ever was an age of the world in which that work and that influence is in the first place higher or in the second place more diffused than it is to-day, I do not know of it, and I have not read of it. (Hear, hear.)

There are certain things which might be said with reference to the National Council of Women which would be certainly congratulatory. I do not think that the sensible, strong-hearted, whole-minded ladies who are engaged in any phase of work for the benefit of society would thank a man for coming and speaking of that work in a merely complimentary way, simply because it is a work in which women are engaged. I think that the same measure should be applied to work whether it be done by men or women, and that measure must be the method, the force, and the tact which underlies and which is put into the work which is carried forward. (Hear, hear.) The coolest possible criticism can apply itself on that line to the work which has been outlined to-night, and can come to no other conclusion than that the work is laudable and, better than that, that the work has been well executed and show, decidedly good results. (Applause.)

If there were no other result than the gathering together of thoughtful and active women from one end of this country to the other, that would be a sufficient excuse for the existence and for the continued work of this organization. I hold that there is no influence more effective in the direction of binding the country together and tending more to elevation and growth than the simple common knowledge that one person obtains of another in the course of joint work and joint enterprise. The very fact that a lady living in Victoria has met a lady who lives in Halifax and has exchanged views with her about some public

or social question in which the sympathies of both of them are interested, constitutes a bond which adds not only to the pleasure but to the goodness of life, and to the goodness of work for the common object. The planting of societies in all the principal centres of this country, and the drawing into those societies in the different centres of the best women from all classes and religions and races, and making them acquainted with each other by an acquaintanceship which afterwards cements itself into friendship and intimacy on the line of a common purpose and a common work, cannot but be of the greatest benefit, not only to the individuals, but to the country at large. (Applause.) If nothing other or better than this was accomplished by this National Council of Women it would certainly be full warrant for its existence, and would entirely justify us who are not privileged to be its members in giving it the fullest support and the heartiest sympathy that we possibly can. (Applause.)

I do not intend to-night to go over the different points which have been outlined, but there are two which you must excuse me for mentioning. Those two matters are a little out of the common line of philanthropic work, and for that reason I mention them. One is an endeavour which has already been made, and which may amount to actual results which will astonish the people of this country,—the simple plan of making a movement towards the introduction of manual training in the schools of this country. (Hear, hear.) If there is one thing that I regret more than another it is that I received my school education at a time before these things were thought of as being possible to embody in the curriculum of the schools. You who believe in charity; you who go about this country seeking to relieve want and poverty; you who seek out the crooked, the weak, the bent, the broken bands of humanity; when you bethink yourselves of the reason that this crookedness and brokenness exist, when you come to enquire what are the causes which render it necessary that alms should be asked and charity should be given, in thousands of cases the answer is that the distressed person does not know how to turn his hand to something that is useful. All manual training was a blank to him when he was young, and not much of it can be learnt afterwards; and when want and misfortune make it impossible for him to continue to carry on the work in which he has been engaged, he is unable to turn to anything else, whereas some training in some manual accomplishment might have enabled him to tide over this time of stress and poverty and want. If this training can be given in the schools of the country, as it can be by the efforts of the country's enlightened womanhood and manhood, you will provide for the young and rising generation a resource which will render the work of Associated Charities thirty or twenty-five years from now a much lighter task than it is to-day. (Applause.)

There is one other thing that I wish to speak about. I should like to refer a little more particularly to the healthy talks or sanitary

talks which have been mentioned. When years ago I myself had something to do with the instruction and training of youth, the wonder always was to me why in a country where we have such healthy surroundings, and where any person who thinks about it knows in a moment that nine-tenths of the sickness comes from actual ignorance of the simple laws of health and sanitation—the wonder, I say, was to me why more of this sanitary knowledge is not imparted as a fundamental requisite in the schools of the country. But even if it is not so imparted to an adequate extent these Women's Councils may do most excellent work in that direction by sanitary talks and by the dissemination of sanitary literature pointing out the simple rules of sanitation which can be easily understood and followed. Out of the larger range of subjects which are occupying the attention of your Council those two seem to me to be very important, and there can be no doubt that the dissemination of practical knowledge on these two subjects will immensely benefit our country.

I am not going to inflict a sermon upon you. These few remarks I felt I ought to make if they would be any encouragement at all to the work of your Local Council here. His Excellency has kindly said that he would launch this resolution; the boat is launched, and well launched; I only want to set the sails and steer it as far as I can under a fair wind. The moment I see a squall rising I am going to hand the vessel over to my honorable friend who comes after me (Mr. Laurier) and ask him to bring it safely into port. (Laughter.)

But one point I must mention before I sit down, and that is this. I remember eighteen years ago (I did not know it was so long) looking down from an elevated ridge of hills upon the valley of the Neckar in Germany, near the mouth of the river where it flows into the Rhine. I saw a village with its houses grouped close together, as is the fashion in village life there, and under the bright sky of an early summer day I saw all the people turning out from the village and going to the fields to till the soil. Every one had his appropriate work; there were ditches to be dug, drills to be made, seeds to be sown, vines to be trained; and now and then I would see some one repairing some damage that had been done by winter or by storm. The whole of the work of those rural people on that day was given to the propagation and cultivation of the products which were their living. I remember watching that and thinking of a larger and wider field, the great field of humanity, where man and his soul is the soil that is tilled, where there are constantly at work good forces from every quarter, from art, from literature, from music, from education, the voice of the priest or the clergyman,—all the influences which philanthropic societies diffuse around them—the passions, the ambitions, the likes, the dislikes of life—all permeating that mass, and all making for good or for ill, some forming and others reforming. In that great field of human effort every man and woman must be doing something, and must be adding either to the

good or to the evil forces, each of which will assuredly bring about its appropriate result. There are in all this multiplicity of activities just two groups under one or the other of which all the forces cast themselves. Those two groups are the formative and the reformatory; and I just bring this little imperfect picture before your minds to-night to point this truth; that when a society of men or women finds itself fit for philanthropic work, the first question is not the question what can be reformed, but what formative work can be done. It is ten thousand times better to take the little vine early and train it up aright, than to wait until it becomes a gnarled and crooked tree and then to endeavor to press it into symmetrical and shapely growth. Philanthropic work loses its very best essence when in its desire to reform something which has already gone wrong it refuses to see what can be done in a formative direction. And it is just here, ladies and gentlemen, where women's power comes in most effectively. She has a hold of the formative influences of society; and in those influences which women exercise from the very first on those who in their turn will be some day men and women, lies the best philanthropic work than can possibly be done. I simply wished to throw out this thought as a suggestion because I know the mistake that I myself made in my own early philanthropic work when I thought that my whole duty was to reform somebody or something. It is far easier and better to take hold of what is young and to gradually train it and form it in fitting and lovely shape, then to wait till it grows old and then to force its growth into unaccustomed directions.

I beg your pardon for having taken so much time and almost preached a sermon to you. It is out of my usual line, I assure you. I am ministerial in some respects, but the rôle of the preacher is one which I do not often assume. If in the mutations of political life it may fall to my lot to have to retire from office and from political position, may I ask that somewhere in this Women's Council some little place may be found for me in which I may do what perhaps after all may be far better work for humanity. (Applause.)

ADDRESS BY THE HON. WILFRID LAURIER.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen :

My friend Mr. Foster, in his opening remarks said that he was going to make an honest avowal. I do not know whether this is the result of the influence of the Parliament of Women; but though I have heard my friend, Mr. Foster, on many occasions before, I never heard him make such a statement as that. (Laughter.) I am, however, going to follow that very good example; I am going also to make an honest avowal. If I take any part in this meeting it is because I have been persuaded to do so under

the gentle persistency of Her Excellency—I use the words advisedly. (Laughter.) The gentle persistency of Her Excellency has persuaded me to come here—not to come here exactly—that required no persuasion—but to take a part in the proceedings of the meeting, and to second the resolution which is now in my hands. That required some persuading—not through any want of good will on my part, not because my heart was not in the movement, but for other good and cogent reasons which I feel very strongly. I am accustomed, like my hon. friend, to rough it on the hill yonder, and the work that we have there to do is so very different from the work that I should have to do here, and the atmosphere which one breathes there is so very different from the atmosphere here, and especially the audience is so very different there, that I felt a little nervous at the very idea of appearing before such a select audience as this. (Laughter.) This is my reason and I hope you will appreciate it. But now I am in the swin, I do not know but that I shall enjoy it (laughter), for I certainly appreciate, as I never did before, the great sacrifices of time and of ease which are made by the ladies of the National Council for the advancement of our common country. I say our common country, and in this I make no exception, for if there was one thing of all others which I enjoyed in the admirable address of Her Excellency, it was that whenever she spoke of Canada she always spoke of it as her country. (Loud applause.) Her Excellency will pardon me if I recall that she had not the advantage which most of us had of being born in this country; she was born in that little isle yonder in the sea, and not in this great country which extends up to the pole. But I hope Her Excellency will also pardon me if I say that wherever she goes, wherever official duties may call her, she will always become part and parcel of the country where she lives. (Applause.)

Her Excellency referred a few moments ago to the fact that there were some men who were still obdurate, who were not altogether reconciled to the idea which presided at the formation of the National Council of Women of Canada. Mr. Foster was kind enough to anticipate what I was going to remark—that that could not apply to any gentleman in this hall, and that Her Excellency meant to reach somebody outside by means of the press. I am sure Her Excellency could not have alluded to anybody from the good Province of Quebec, where husbands give their purses to their wives and have to coax their wives to give them money to spend. (Laughter.) If there is any part of the Dominion of Canada where the work which is undertaken by Her Excellency is to be appreciated it will be in the Province of Quebec, which is peopled by a race which above all things prides itself upon its gallantry. (Applause.)

For my part, ladies and gentlemen, I will only recall what is in the mind of you all. We know by the teaching of history how potent for good is the hand of woman. If you go for instance to France, the

country of my own ancestors, a country rich in heroes of every kind, perhaps after all the most splendid figure of French history is not the figure of a man but of a woman, Joan of Arc (applause), a simple peasant girl who rescued her country when the task had been given up by the ablest men of that day. If you cross the channel and go over to England I am sure everybody would admit that there never was a man on the throne of England who could discharge the duties of a monarch as Her Majesty Queen Victoria has done. (Loud applause.) If from that high station you go lower, we shall have to admit that some of the greatest reforms that have ever been achieved in England, reforms which have civilized her and made her the first country in the world, have been accomplished by women. If for instance the life of prisoners has been made what it is to-day, if prisons are no longer cages fit only for animals, but are fit habitations for men, it is due, as we know, to a woman—God for ever bless the name of Elizabeth Fry! (Applause.) If the care which is due to those who risk their lives upon the battle field is now bestowed upon wounded soldiers and they are tended as they should be, it is due to a woman, to Florence Nightingale. (Applause.) If I cross over to this continent, we must acknowledge that the cause of the abolition or slavery in the United States has been advocated by women just as much as by men; and if the death-blow has been finally given to slavery, it is not altogether due to the sagacity and wisdom of Abraham Lincoln, or to the courage, devotion, and tenacity of General Grant, but the largest share of the praise is due to a woman, Mrs. Beecher Stowe. (Applause.) It was the pen of Mrs. Beecher Stowe that painted the horrors of slavery and brought the North to a determination to resist everything in order to wipe out slavery from the land. (Applause.) Though we have a country which is enriched by the names and memories of Montcalm and Wolfe and many other heroes, you will agree with me that there is no brighter name in Canadian history than that of that young girl Mademoiselle De Verchères who fought against invasion (applause); and perhaps it may not be out of place when there is talk of war to remind you that even women can fight. (Applause.) This is what we know as to what women can do.

Now I am here to testify that this Council of Women, which is only two years old, has already achieved a very great deal. My friend, Mr. Foster, struck the right key when he remarked that if the National Council had done nothing else than to bring together women from the east and from the west they had done a great deal towards the unification of this country, with its diverse creeds and races. Her Excellency said that one aim, one purpose, one object which the National Council had was to smooth away ancient feuds and rancours; what nobler work can there be than that! (Applause.) What we want in this country above all things, if we are to become a nation, as with God's help we shall, is to have peace, harmony and union amongst all the heterogeneous.

ous elements which the providence of God has brought into this fair land. For this I look above all things to the hand of women, and you will all agree with me that the hand of woman, was made for union. (Loud applause.)

The resolution was carried unanimously.

Mademoiselle Duhamel sang.

Mrs. Thorburn moved a vote of thanks to the Governor-General for his presence, and made special reference to His Excellency's patriotic closing words.

Mrs. Peter Whelan seconded the resolution, which was carried by acclamation.

The Governor-General in responding congratulated the ladies present on the business-like and orderly procedure of the meeting.

Mrs. Tilton then moved that the thanks of the meeting be given to Mr. Foster and Mr. Laurier for their presence and for their able and eloquent addresses.

Mrs. Edwards seconded the resolution, and it was carried by acclamation, and duly responded to.

The proceedings were closed by the singing of the National Anthem.

